

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 IO-13 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FPC-01 H-01 INR-07
INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-06
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R 281800Z FEB 77
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6011
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION OECD PARIS
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART
USMISSION USBERLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 03613

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, GW
SUBJECT: FRG TO DEBATE ENERGY PROGRAM IN APRIL

REF: BONN 3530

1. THE GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTIES HAVE AGREED TO
POSE A MAJOR PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION ON THE GERMAN
ENERGY PROGRAM IN MID-MARCH. A PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION
OF THIS TYPE WILL REQUIRE A BUNDESTAG DEBATE ON THE
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SUBJECT IN ADDITION TO THE NORMAL WRITTEN REPLY. THE
QUESTION AND ENSUING DEBATE ARE EXPECTED TO FOCUS
ON NUCLEAR ENERGY, ALTHOUGH THE BROADER AREAS OF
ENVIRONMENT, CONSERVATION, AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY
SOURCES WILL ALSO BE INCLUDED.

2. THE TIMING OF THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WILL ENABLE

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO COMPLETE THE GENERAL GUIDELINES OF THE SECOND REVISION OF THE ENERGY PROGRAM BY THE END OF MARCH AND TO PREPARE A WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WITHIN THE FOUR WEEK TIME LIMIT. THE ACTUAL DEBATE ON ENERGY POLICY WILL THEN TAKE PLACE AFTER EASTER.

3. SOURCES IN BOTH GOVERNMENT AND INDUSTRY TELL US THAT THE DECISION TO CALL FOR A DEBATE WAS PROMPTED BY SEVERAL CONCERNS. FIRST, AS NOTED REFTEL, THE SUPPORT OF BOTH BUNDESTAG DEPUTIES AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR THE FRG NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAM IS NOT PARTICULARLY STRONG. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HOPE THAT FULL AIRING OF THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE AND THE CONSEQUENCES OF INACTION WILL INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRESENT GERMAN COMMITMENT TO DOMESTIC NUCLEAR POWER PLANT CONSTRUCTION. SECONDLY, THE DECISION TO HAVE THE SPD PUT FORWARD THE PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION WAS DESIGNED TO HEAD OFF ANY SIMILAR ACTION BY THE OPPOSITION PARTIES. THIRD, SINCE THE FRG HAD PLANNED TO RELEASE THE SECOND REVISION OF THE ENERGY PROGRAM THIS SPRING ANYWAY, THE DEBATE WILL GIVE GREATER EXPOSURE TO THE GOALS OF THE SECOND REVISION AND THE PROPOSED GOVERNMENT POLICY MEASURES FOR ACHIEVING THEM. OPENING UP THE SECOND REVISION TO DEBATE BEFORE THE DETAILS OF IT ARE COMPLETED, SHOULD, IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW, BROADEN SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM BY BRINGING ALL COALITION DEPUTIES INTO LINE BEHIND THE CHANCELLOR'S PROGRAM.

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4. THE BROAD POLICY GUIDELINES FOR THE SECOND REVISION ARE NOW BEING THRASHED OUT IN THE RESPONSIBLE MINISTRIES. OUR SOURCES TELL US THAT THERE WILL BE NO RPT NO MAJOR CHANGES IN THE POSITION OF THE GOVERNMENT ON ENERGY POLICY. IN THE SENSITIVE AREA OF NUCLEAR ENERGY, ECONOMICS MINISTER FRIDERICH AND OTHERS HAVE ALREADY MADE CLEAR THAT THE FRG COMMITMENT TO NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS REMAINS FIRM. ACCORDING TO OUR SOURCES, NO NEW INITIATIVES ARE PLANNED IN THE AREAS OF COAL, GAS AND OIL, BUT ADDITIONAL MEASURES TO STIMULATE CONSERVATION EFFORTS CAN BE EXPECTED.
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